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# RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

# NEWS

"We must open wider the doors of opportunity....  
for the good of our country and all our people"

President Eisenhower

U. S. Department of Agriculture

Washington, D. C.  
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No. 5

Twelve States have taken the lead in the Rural Development Program by naming a total of 27 pilot counties and 3 trade areas. Work is being started or present programs of assistance to small farmers and part-time farmers will be included in the total development effort. Seven additional States are planning Rural Development Programs in 1 or 2 counties each.

PILOT AREAS HAVE VARIED ECONOMIES: The counties and areas selected vary widely in type of farming, amount of industry present, resources, and economic possibilities. Pilot programs in them are concerned with total development, will benefit all groups, and will provide invaluable experience as the Rural Development Program is expanded.

Arkansas: Ouachita, Phillips, and Van Buren. Ouachita, in south Arkansas, has mostly part-time and residential farms, and nearly half the farm operators are colored.

Phillips county is in the Mississippi Delta region, and cotton growing predominates. Sixty-eight percent of the farmers are tenants and more than two-thirds are colored.

Van Buren is in the Ozark Plateau area of hilly and wooded land, where self-sufficing farming is most common. Over half the county's farms are part-time or residential, and most commercial farms sold less than \$2,500 worth of products in 1954.

Kentucky: The State Rural Development Committee will organize Rural Development Program work on a trade-area basis and has selected three areas -- Ashland-Huntington in the northeast, Bowling Green in the southwest, and Glasgow in the south central part of the State. It is planned that counties around these major trading centers will become part of the total development program. The Kentucky group believes that more can be accomplished "in an area program through area leadership" than on a county basis.

Mississippi: Covington, Holmes, and Tippah. Cotton is the leading crop, but resources and economic conditions are different in each of the counties.

Covington is in the Gulf Coast region, where part of the land is forested or cutover. Over one-third of the farms are part-time or residential, and most of the commercial farms had low sales in 1954.

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This is one of a series of periodic reports on RDP activities by business, local, State, Federal, farm and other leadership, working together. If you have comments on the Rural Development Program or this Newsletter, please address communications to the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, 25, D. C.

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In Holmes County over two-thirds of the farms sell less than \$2,500 worth of products. More than three-fourths of the farm operators are colored, and 60 percent are tenants.

Tippah, in the Mississippi clay hills region, grows cotton and has some dairying. There are many part-time and residential farms.

The three counties have expanded programs of farm and home planning, and additional needs are now being studied.

Missouri: The three counties -- Dent, Oregon, and Ripley -- are in the southeastern part of the State, the Ozark Plateau region. Half or more of the farms are part-time or residential. Most commercial farms sell less than \$2,500 worth of products. As part of the program, an assistant county agent will be employed in each of these counties to aid small farmers in developing balanced farming.

New Mexico: Two adjoining counties, Sandoval and Santa Fe, in the northwest part of the State. More than half the farms in both counties are not commercial, and many of the commercial farms sold less than \$2,500 worth of products in 1954.

Oklahoma: Choctaw, on the Red River, in the eastern part of the State. Half the 1,600 farms are part-time and residential, and most of the commercial farms have low sales. The State Rural Development Committee has named an executive committee to carry forward program plans.

Oregon: Two counties, Marion and Washington. They are in the industrial area of Portland and Salem. About 1,500 of the 4,500 farms in Marion County and 1,600 of the 3,700 farms in Washington County are part-time and residential. Rural Development Programs will center on farm operators who get much of their income working off the farm.

Pennsylvania: Fayette County, south of Pittsburgh, has been named for pilot work. The county is hilly and wooded and coal mining is important. Most farms are part-time, residential, or of the small commercial type. The county has both an industrial and an agricultural development committee, and has been the subject of a Penn State economic study. Because conditions are similar to those in many Pennsylvania counties, work in Fayette should point the way to development elsewhere.

South Carolina: Six counties in different parts of the State have been named -- Colleton, Edgefield, Florence, Richland, Spartanburg, and York. Cotton is the principal crop in most of them, but there is some livestock farming and Florence County grows a great deal of tobacco. Almost half the farm operators are colored in most of these counties, and tenancy is high in some.

Tennessee: The State Rural Development Committee selected Grainger, Hardin, and Macon, because they will point the way to future work in the three main State regions.

Grainger is in the east Tennessee area, which has become more industrialized in recent years. One-third of the farms are part-time or residential and most of the others had low sales in 1954.

Hardin is on the Mississippi-Alabama border in a cotton-growing area that has some livestock farming. Roughly half the 2,008 farms are listed as commercial, but only about 340 had sales of more than \$2,500 worth of products in 1954.



Tobacco farming predominates in Macon, which is next to the Kentucky border in central Tennessee. Most farms are commercial, but four-fifths sold less than \$2,500 worth of products last year.

Committees will direct the Rural Development Programs in these counties, and the State Extension Service will provide general administrative leadership.

Texas: Cherokee County, in the sandy coastal plain of eastern Texas. Cotton is the leading crop, along with feed crops for livestock. More than half the county's farms are part-time and residential, and many of the commercial farms have low sales. A feature of the program here is a research project analyzing development opportunities.

Washington: Clark County, containing the city of Vancouver and near Portland, and Kitsap County, across Puget Sound from Seattle. Most farms in Kitsap and more than half in Clark are part-time or residential. Farm and Home Planning with part-time farmers will be emphasized, and certain communities are being selected for a community-wide approach.

WORKING GUIDE: State officials giving leadership in pilot Rural Development Program work have been sent a USDA release describing Federal Government services available to them.

The four-page "working guide" points out that everything practical and appropriate will be done to help make pilot programs successful. It lists Federal departments and agencies concerned in the Rural Development Program and describes assistance they can give using present resources.

If you want a copy of this "Working Guide to Federal Services," write the Office of Information, USDA, Washington 25, D. C.

DO YOUR PROGRAMS MEET THESE TESTS? Some leaders seem to feel that their present agricultural programs meet the need for a Rural Development Program. Usually this is not the case. In a recent speech, Under Secretary True D. Morse, who has responsibility for coordinating the Rural Development Program, described the "broad attack on many fronts," which was needed, and named five principal objectives. Can your programs to help low-income farmers and rural areas meet these tests:

1. The Farm and Home Unit approach to extension is a central part of the program.
2. More job opportunities must be available for underemployed farm families. Industrial expansion is important.
3. The young people need more adequate vocational training -- and more years of schooling.
4. Health and nutritional needs must be met more adequately. This is especially important for young people.
5. Character and religious quality of our future workers and leaders must be strengthened. There is a big job for churches as part of this total program.

The Rural Development Program is designed to bring together the combined efforts of all who should have a part in solving problems of low income and underemployed farm families. Do your present programs meet the above objectives?

TUSKEGEE MEETING CENTERS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: The 13th annual meeting of Negro professional agricultural workers at Tuskegee Institute, November 13 to 15, was devoted entirely to a discussion of the Rural Development Program and its possible effect on the 375,000 colored farm families with very low incomes and special needs. Representatives from Tuskegee, several Land-Grant Colleges, private industry, and several Federal departments were present.

Many of those attending spoke of the need for greater participation by rural Negro people in agency programs. It was agreed that more Negro personnel were needed to work with Negro farm families having low incomes.

SMALL INDUSTRY, A RURAL AREA OPPORTUNITY: Gustav Larson, Deputy Director of the Commerce Department's Office of Area Development, in a recent address spoke of the possibilities for more small industry. "Local development groups," he said, "State agencies, and certain Federal Departments can speed the development of these small industry potentials by undertaking some additional activities."

A small industry committee in an area can provide necessary leadership by bringing to light the needs and resources present, publicizing opportunities, and giving technical advice and assistance to local people. State development agencies and the Department of Commerce are in a position to give vital help and encouragement to these committees. Mr. Larson said: "A positive long-range small industry development program...will at least make a start on the important objective of providing more industrial jobs in low income areas." A copy of his speech is available. Write the Office of Information, USDA, Washington 25, D. C.

CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS POINT UP INCOME PROBLEM: The basic need in rural areas of low income is for more on-the-farm resources and increased opportunity for off-the-farm employment. This was the consensus of agricultural and rural life experts who testified November 21 before the Joint Subcommittee on Low-Income Families, headed by Senator Sparkman. A detailed report of the testimony at this hearing will appear in a future issue of the News.

WIDESPREAD INTEREST IN PROGRAM: The Vice-Chairman of the American Legion's Agriculture and Conservation Committee, A. W. Rozar, has reported that the Legion has gone on record in support of the Rural Development Program. The Agriculture and Conservation Committee will "take advantage of every opportunity to cooperate with other agencies and organizations in putting the President's program across," he writes.

Large numbers of letters requesting information and expressing approval of the program have been received by the Department of Agriculture since last April, when the report, "Development of Agriculture's Human Resources," appeared. Nationwide business, labor, religious, agricultural, and civic organizations have requested continuing information on the Rural Development Program. (The News now goes to more than 4,000 individuals and organizations in all the 48 States.) Several foreign governments have requested information on the program, and the International Cooperation Administration sends the News to many of its missions in foreign countries.